Myer Defends WRA Policy to Release American Japanese

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Dillon S. Myer, director of the War Relocation Authority, today stoutly defended before a Dies subcommittee the program of his agency for releasing Americans of Japanese ancestry from the 10 relocation camps in which they were placed after outbreak of the war.

It has been estimated 20,000 of the 130,000 evacuated from the West Coast after the attack on Pearl Harbor have been given either temporary or indefinite freedom to relieve America's labor shortage.

"It is the position of the WRA that its leave regulations are essential to the legal validity of the evacuation and relocation program," declared Mr. Myer. "These leave regulations establish a procedure under which the loyal citizens and law-abiding aliens may leave a relocation center to become re-established in normal life."

5,000 Never Entered Center.

Mr. Myer pointed out that when the evacuation of the Japanese on the West Coast was originally determined upon, it was contemplated that the evacuees would be freed immediately to go anywhere they wanted within the United States so long as they remained outside of the West Coast evacuated area.

"Approximately 8,000 evacuees left the evacuated area at that time and 5,000 of those have never lived in relocation centers," he declared. "The decision to provide relocation centers for the evacuees was not made until some six weeks after evacuation was decided upon and was made largely because of a recognition of the danger that the hasty and unplanned resettlement of 112,000 people might create civil disorder."

Mr. Myer argued that detention within a relocation camp is not a necessary part of the evacuation process. "It is not intended," he declared, "to be more than a temporary stage in the process of the evacuees into new homes and jobs."

Must Meet Four Conditions.

Those released from the relocation centers for indefinite periods, Mr. Myer said, must meet the following four conditions:

"1. WRA must be satisfied from its investigation that there is no reason to believe issuance of leave to the particular evacuee will interfere with the war program or endanger the public peace and security;

"2. The individual must have a job or means of support;

"3. The community to which the individual wishes to go must be one in which evacuees can relocate without public disturbance;

"4. The evacuee must agree to keep WRA notified of any change of address.

"The War Relocation Authority is denying indefinite leave to those evacuees who request repatriation or expatriation to Japan or who have answered in the negative," he said, "or refused to answer at all, a direct question as to their loyalty to the United States, or against whom the intelligence agencies or WRA records supply direct evidence of disloyalty or subversiveness. The great majority of the evacuees fall into none of these classes and are thus eligible to leave under the authority's regulations."